

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - E-mail: codex@fao.org - www.codexalimentarius.org

Agenda Item 4

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Thirty-second Session

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Comments of Japan

Agenda item 4 - Procedural guidance for committees working by correspondence

General Comments

Japan wishes to thank the initiative of New Zealand in the Electronic Working Group for preparing actual draft procedural guidelines for Committees working by correspondence (CWBC). As a co-chair, Japan is very honored to have contributed to this work with the United States and Germany.

Japan is of the view that CWBC have been the exception rather than the rule and should only be considered in specific circumstances or situations. We support most parts of the draft guidelines based on that premise, including the structure, the areas where specific procedural guidance may be appropriate, the criteria for selection and assignment of work to CWBC, and the content. We believe that the draft guidelines will help us proceed with this agenda at CCGP32.

Specific Comments

The inclusion of virtual meetings in guidelines for CWBC

Japan suggests deleting bracketed texts related to virtual meetings in the draft. CWBC are completely different from Committees holding virtual sessions. We are of the view that the inclusion of virtual meetings as part of the guidelines for CWBC is beyond the mandate of the work which was tasked by CAC41 (2018).

We also note that CAC43 (2020) agreed the possibility of holding virtual meetings of Committees in 2021, which did not require any change to procedural guidance at this point. CCEXEC80 addressed the issue of holding virtual meetings, recognizing CAC43's conclusions, and made some necessary recommendations for moving forward with Codex work in 2021. Given these facts, Japan is of the view that CCGP does not need to address the issue of holding virtual meetings at present. The focus of CCGP should be first placed on completing the work to develop procedural guidelines for CWBC within the agreed mandate.

Options for the Chairperson when a CWBC is not able to progress work, and Voting

Japan supports the current texts regarding voting in Section 9. Voting is not excluded at the committee level under the Rules of Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, but should not be applied in CWBC to resolve different positions. The alternatives indicated in the part "Options for the Chairperson when a CWBC is not able to progress" could serve as a possible way to seek the next step.